

NEWS – CONGRESSMAN PETE STARK

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**BREAKING NEWS: MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PREMIUMS DOWN 6 PERCENT,  
ENROLLMENT UP 6 PERCENT**

**CMS Administrator Delivers News At Ways And Means Hearing**

WASHINGTON- Today, while testifying before the House Ways and Means Committee, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator Don Berwick announced that premiums in Medicare Advantage (MA) plans have dropped by 6 percent and enrollment has risen by 6 percent for 2011. This is the first full year that MA plans operate under the health reform law.

At the hearing, Dr. Berwick testified: **"We actually have some quite exciting new data just now on enrollments and premiums. Despite earlier projections of enrollment declines and premium increases, the actual data we now have in 2011 shows that enrollment in Medicare Advantage increased 6 percent, to more than 12 million beneficiaries. On average, beneficiaries have seen a 6 percent reduction in their premiums, and there is a 5 percent increase in the number of beneficiaries who are now in four- and five-star Medicare Advantage contracts this year versus last year. That translates into more beneficiaries being in lower cost and higher quality plans."**

Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA), Ranking Member of the House Ways and Means Health Subcommittee, and Rep. Sander Levin (D-MI), Ranking Member of the Ways and Means Committee, commented on the news:

Rep. Stark: **"Despite Republicans playing the part of Chicken Little, the sky is not falling for Medicare Advantage as health reform is implemented. Premiums are down and enrollment is up. Once again, Republican rhetoric doesn't match reality."**

Rep. Levin: **"The Affordable Care Act strengthens Medicare's future, improves benefits for senior citizens and people with disabilities and saves money for taxpayers. During the health care reform debate and in the time since its enactment, health reform opponents have relied on myths and scare tactics to create fear and uncertainty among Medicare beneficiaries."**

The Medicare Advantage program has remained strong through implementation of health

reform. In addition to today's news:

- On average, there are 26 Medicare Advantage plans to choose from in every county across the country.
- Access to Medicare Advantage remains strong, as more than 99% of Medicare beneficiaries have a choice of Medicare Advantage plans as an alternative to Original Medicare in areas where they live.
- In total, the Administration negotiated \$150 million in reduced beneficiary premiums and cost sharing with Medicare Advantage insurers last year using new authorities granted by the Affordable Care Act.

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